

The Environmental Clearance Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 established protocol by which agencies are required to evaluate project impacts on the social and natural environment. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has developed [NEPA guidance](#) under Order 5050.4B

There are three levels of environmental clearance:

Categorical Exclusion: Projects that may be eligible for a categorical exclusion (catex) are listed in tables 6-1 and 6-2 of Order 5050.4B. Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Aeronautics processes catex documents for general aviation (GA) airports. Primary airports are responsible for completing the FAA environmental checklist and providing the information to the Detroit ADO. Catex documents typically take three months to complete.

Environmental Assessment (EA): The types of projects normally requiring an EA are described in Chapter 7 of Order 5050.4B. MDOT, Aeronautics coordinates EAs on behalf of general aviation airports. GA airports should plan on EAs taking 12 months to complete and plan accordingly. Shorter or longer time frames may apply, contact the MDOT, Aeronautics Environmental Specialist to discuss project specific schedules.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): The types of projects normally requiring an EIS are described in Chapter 9 of Order 5050.4B. The FAA is required to be the lead agency for all EIS documents. EIS documents may take up to three years to complete and are generally significantly more costly than the other types of environmental documentation.

For more information about environmental clearance, contact the MDOT, Aeronautics Environmental Specialist:

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